



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MRS EDNA MOLEWA, AT THE LAUNCH
OF SIP18 AND THE BG3 PIPELINE, EMFULENI, SEDIBENG DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY, GAUTENG PROVINCE,**

29 JUNE 2013

Programme Director

MEC Ntombi Mekgoe standing in for the Premier of Gauteng

Ministers Present here

Executive Mayor of Sedibeng District

Mayors of all Local Municipalities in the District

Local and ward councillors

Representatives from other government entities

Officials from the Department of Water Affairs and their counterparts at all levels

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed an honour for me to be amongst you today to celebrate the beginning of a programme that will surely change the lives of many of our people in poor rural and urban areas. We are here today to demonstrate our government's seriousness in improving the lives of our people through Infrastructure Development.

I welcome my colleagues at Cabinet and other spheres of government who work day in day out for the common goal as I indicated, to change the lives of our people for the better. Indeed, this special celebration would not have been possible if it was not because of the effort we have collectively put to ensure such a better future of our country. I also want to send my sense of gratitude to the people not only of Emfuleni, but indeed all South Africans for working with government to build a better South Africa for all.

It is indeed sad to realize that 4,5 million people or 9% of our country's population lives in small towns in rural areas and 15,5 million people or 31% of our population lives in small rural villages and scattered settlements that have poor or inadequate infrastructure. This creates hardships to local citizens and, of course, slows, in general terms, development of those areas.

It is for this reason that our government took a decision that providing infrastructure for the economy and communities should be one of the main ways South Africa will realise inclusive and jobs-rich growth. We are convinced that good quality, affordable infrastructure raises economic

productivity, permits economic expansion and allows marginalised households and communities to take advantage of new opportunities. It also builds social capital and raises living standards as people access electricity, piped water, housing and reliable transport.

For this reason, government adopted a National Infrastructure Plan in 2012 that intends to transform our economic landscape while simultaneously creating significant numbers of new jobs, and strengthening the delivery of basic services.

Based on this, the government has developed and approved eighteen Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) to support economic development and address service delivery in the poorest provinces. Each SIP comprises a large number of specific infrastructure components and programmes.

Today we have gathered here to launch one of these SIPs – the 18th SIP or as we call it, SIP18. This programme, in simple terms, is a 10-year plan that will address the estimated backlog of adequate water to 1,4 million households and that of basic sanitation to 2,1 million households.

The recent “green drop” report indicates that of 914 water supply systems assessed, 41% scored less than 50%. Similarly, 55% out of 821 wastewater treatment works are in a collapsed state. On-site sanitation systems provided in mostly rural areas have been found to be relatively robust, with inadequate provision for pit emptying. Water wastage and inefficiencies account for revenue losses of more than R11bn per annum in the municipal sector alone.

As a water scarce country, government supports water demand measures including advanced pressure management projects, water leak management and water demand awareness measures.

This programme seeks to fast-track water licenses, expand water-system capacity, speed-up build programmes and address backlog projects to provide new infrastructure. It also seeks to rehabilitate and upgrade existing infrastructure for development of water resources, potable water supply, non-potable water distribution, collection of water-borne sewage, waste water treatment, and on-site sanitation.

We also envisage improving management of water infrastructure through a focussed asset management programme, revision of water sector institutions, capacity building of rural municipalities and National Water Conservation and Water Demand Management Programme.

Apart from the job creation outcomes that are envisaged and will be realized, this programme, will also significantly address the spatial imbalances by raising the level of service delivery and quality across the country and shifting service quality toward areas that are underserviced or un-serviced.

The municipalities that we will target under this programme are mainly in rural regions and the local nature of the programme delivery will add

significant localised benefits in the construction and post build maintenance processes.

The impact of accessible clean water and sanitation services, coupled with upgraded road and electricity access will have significant quality of life and economic development benefits. The programme will initially have limited direct impact in these areas, but does have a significant potential to raise the level of attractiveness of these areas to investors, that would also expand the pool of potential investments.

The increased service levels and quality as well as infrastructure access will significantly raise the micro-economic development potential of these areas, while the localised nature of the implementation will ensure direct economic benefits. Indeed, this programme will have a significant localised positive impact on water quality and environmental sustainability across the country.

We have identified various projects throughout the provinces through which we will drive this programme. One of these is the Sedibeng Regional Sewer Scheme (SRSS), which we will implement in this district. The SRSS project is a major infrastructure project we have identified with the Presidential Infrastructure Co-ordinating Commission (PICC) worth approximately R5bn in capital expenditure. Last month, I met with the political steering committee for this project in Pretoria and we signed the Implementation Protocol (IP) for the project. This IP will guide the three spheres of government in the implementation of the project, which is expected to start

soon. In this regard, we have also identified and appointed Rand Water as the implementing agent for this Scheme.

The Sedibeng District Municipality and other areas are going to benefit from another project which we have come to commission here today. The Rand Water's BG3 pipeline is definitely an absolutely significant project. It is also Sub-Saharan Africa's largest water pipeline. It runs from the Vaal Dam to its Zoekfontein Plant, 8,6 km away. The pipeline will increase the water distribution in this district and the surrounding areas.

Most importantly, the BG3 pipeline runs adjacent to Rand Water's existing BG1 and BG2 pipelines that supply Gauteng and parts of the neighbouring Free State, Mpumalanga and the North West provinces with water. Once in commission the BG3 pipeline will allow for Rand Water's two pipelines (BG1 and BG2) to be shut down for refurbishment and maintenance as and when necessary, a very important issue indeed.

I am pleased that the BG3 pipeline will not only be augmenting (increasing) raw water capacity to Zuikerbosch by up to 2100 Ml/d, thus it will accommodate the region's growth water demand projected to 2030, but because it duplicates the BG2 (existing line), it will allow the BG2 to be taken out of service for crucially needed maintenance or renovation works. This will play a vital role in our effort to ensure that our infrastructure is maintained accordingly.

The pipeline will also supply the Zuikerbosch water treatment plant with raw water if the Vaal Dam drops abnormally low, thus allowing for continuous supply of raw water. As of 2011, if the Vaal Dam drops below 85% Zuikerbosch cannot supply more than 3700 Ml/d which puts the overall supply to the region at risk. Therefore, the construction of this pipeline will address this challenge. Subsequently, there will be enhanced supply of water to this area and other areas for household consumption, including for sanitation and improved sewer works.

I once more want to thank everybody who is part of this project and wish you well in your further endeavours.

I thank you.